

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 AID-01 SS-07 NSC-06 /024 W

----- 116858

P 020621Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9574

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 3776

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP

SUBJECT: INDOCHINA CODEL VISIT TO PHNOM PENH, MARCH 1

1. SUMMARY. THE SIX-MEMBER CODEL SPENT A RUSHED AND HECTIC EIGHT HOURS IN PHNOM PENH, BUT SUCCEEDED IN SHAPING THEIR OWN SEPARATE PROGRAMS FOR AT LEAST THREE OF THOSE HOURS. THEY HAD ACCESS TO THE PRESS, AND VICE VERSA, IN LARGE NUMBERS THROUGHOUT THE DAY. EMBASSY FEELS THE VISIT WAS A DEFINITE PLUS, AND THAT AT LEAST THREE AND PERHAPS AS MANY AS FIVE OF THE GROUP APPEAR NOW TO FAVOR SUPPLEMENTAL AID FOR CAMBODIA. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SIX-MEMBER CODEL ARRIVED IN PHNOM PENH AT 0820 ON MARCH 1 BY C-47 FROM SAIGON. IT WAS COMPOSED OF SENATOR BARTLETT AND REPS. MCCLOSKEY, CHAPPELL, ABZUG, MURTHA AND FENWICK. AT THE LAST MOMENT REPS. FLYNT AND FRASER DECIDED TO REMAIN BEHIND IN SAIGON. ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB AND DEPUTY ASST. SEC. OF DEFENSE ERICH VON MARBOD ACCOMPANIED THE GROUP. AT THE ARRIVAL AREA AT POCHENTONG THEY HAD A BRIEF CHANCE TO OBSERVE UNLOADING OF A DC-8 WITH RICE AND A C-130 WITH AMMUNITION.

3. THE GROUP MET BRIEFLY WITH AMBASSADOR DEAN AT THE EMBASSY. THEY DECIDED TO SCRAP MUCH OF THE PREPARED SCHEDULE. FROM EMBASSY THEY WENT TO CHAMCAR MON AND CALLED ON PRESIDENT LON NOL. THE TEXT OF THE MARSHAL'S BRIEF REMARKS ARE BEING REPORTED SEPTTEL. THE GROUP ASKED A FEW QUESTIONS. MRS. ABZUG INQUIRED ABOUT MEASURES TAKEN TO COMBAT CORRUPTION AND GOT WHAT SHE
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FELT WAS A VAGUE, UNRESPONSIVE SORT OF REPLY. IT WAS

ESTABLISHED THAT BOTH THE GKR SENATE AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ARE MADE UP OF REPRESENTATIVES OF A SINGLE PARTY AND NO FORMAL OPPOSITION EXISTS IN THESE BODIES. SENATOR BARTLETT ASKED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE ADDITIONAL \$222 MILLION WERE, AND WERE NOT, VOTED, AND RECEIVED AN APPROPRIATE REPLY.

4. THE GROUP THEN RETURNED TO THE EMBASSY FOR A MILITARY BRIEFING (WHICH WE HAD NOT SCHEDULED BUT WHICH THEY REQUESTED) AND TO DISCUSS WHAT THEY INDIVIDUALLY WISHED TO DO WITH THE REMAINDER OF THE MORNING. IT APPEARED THAT THE FOUR MEN WISHED TO SPEND THEIR TIME VISITING MILITARY UNITS, PREFERABLY AS CLOSE TO "THE FRONT" AS POSSIBLE, AND THAT THEY WISHED TO BE ESCORTED BY ASSISTANT ARMY ATTACHES AND PRESS CORRESPONDENTS, RATHER THAN BY EMBASSY CIVILIANS OR BY THE GROUP OF SENIOR ENGLISH-SPEAKING KHMERS WHO HAD BEEN STANDING BY TO ACCOMPANY THE CODEL GROUPS. OF THE TWO LADIES, MRS. ABZUG ALSO WISHED TO SEE MILITARY UNITS, WHILE MRS. FENWICK WAS MORE INTERESTED IN THE REFUGEE CAMPS, NUTRITION CENTERS, AND OTHER HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS OF THE SORT ENVISAGED IN THE EMBASSY'S ORIGINAL SCHEDULE.

5. ARRANGEMENTS WERE HASTILY MADE TO ACCOMMODATE THEIR WISHES. MCCLOSKEY AND BARTLETT VISITED THE 3RD DIVISION, WHILE CHAPPELL, MURTHA AND VON MARBOD WENT TO THE 2ND DIVISION. THE LADIES WENT TO THE CAMBODIAN A NUTRITION CENTER AND ONE OR TWO REFUGEE CAMPS, AND THEN DROVE NORTH ALONG ROUTE 5 IN SEARCH OF "THE FRONT." THERE WAS NO FIREFIGHT IN PROGRESS AT THE TIME. THE ACCOMPANYING ASST. ARMA GOT THEM TURNED BACK SOUTH WHEN HE FELT THEY WERE CLOSE ENOUGH TO AN ENEMY PRESENCE. MRS. ABZUG WAS SOMEWHAT DISAPPOINTED IN THIS, THE MORE SO WHEN SHE LATER HEARD ACCOUNTS OF THE UNITS VISITED BY HER MALE COLLEAGUES. ON THE WHOLE, EACH OF THE GROUPS SEEMED REASONABLY CONTENTED WITH THEIR MORNING SCHEDULES, WHICH AT LEAST HAD THE VIRTUE OF BEING CHOSEN BY THEM. ALL THREE GROUPS WERE HOTLY PURSUED BY THE LARGE PRESS CONTINGENT NOW IN PHNOM PENH (WHICH INCLUDED FIVE OR SIX MORE BROUGHT OVER FROM SAIGON ON THE CODEL PLANE).
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6. A SIMPLE BUFFET LUNCHEON WAS HELD AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE, AND A LARGE NUMBER OF KHMERS WERE PRESENT. IT WAS PRECEDED BY PERHAPS 3/4 OF AN HOUR OF ROVING DISCUSSIONS, ALTHOUGH MCCLOSKEY AND BARTLETT RETURNED TOO LATE FOR THIS. THE LADIES FULFILLED AN EXPRESSED WISH TO TALK TO STUDENTS, WITH THE AID OF A KHMER-SPEAKING EMBOFF INTERPRETER. OTHERS SPOKE WITH REFUGEES AND FORMER KC

PARTY MEMBERS WHO HAD RALLIED (THE LATTER MADE AN ESPECIALLY STRONG IMPRESSION UPON CHAPPELL). INCIDENTALLY, MRS. FENWICK'S FRENCH WAS EXCELLENT. AT THE LUNCHEON ITSELF THERE WAS A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF TABLEHOPPING BY THE CODEL, THE PRIME MINISTER, CINC/FANK LTG SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ, AND SOME OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING KHMER CABINET MINISTERS. AT ONE END OF THE ROOM WAS A DISPLAY OF CAPTURED ENEMY WEAPONS OF ALL CALIBERS, WITH THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN CLEARLY MARKED. THE PRESS WERE PRESENT IN LARGE NUMBERS, AS THEY WERE THROUGHOUT THE DAY.
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ACTION H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9575

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 3776

7. THE GROUP, EXCEPT FOR MURTHA WHO WAS OFF ELSEWHERE WITH VON MARBOD, THEN WENT TO THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE FOR A PRIVATE DISCUSSION WITH THE AMBASSADOR, ASST. SEC. HABIB, AND MEMBERS OF THE EMBASSY STAFF OF THE SEVERAL AGENCIES. PERTINENT QUESTIONS WERE ASKED BY EACH. ANSWERS TO SOME QUESTIONS WILL BE COMPILED AND CABLED IN SEPTEL TO ASST. SEC. HABIB FOR DELIVERY TO DELEGATION PRIOR TO THEIR DEPARTURE FROM SAIGON. DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS WERE FRANK AND PROVIDED SOME INDICATION OF THE VIEWS OF EACH VISITOR AND THE IMPRESSION MADE UPON HIM OR HER BY THE DAY'S ACTIVITIES.

8. THE GROUP THEN MET FOR FIFTEEN TO TWENTY MINUTES INDIVIDUALLY WITH PRESS AND CAMERAMEN ON THE RESIDENCE LAWN PRIOR TO THEIR DEPARTURE FOR AIRPORT. TAKEOFF, AFTER FAREWELLS FROM THE PRIME MINISTER, FOREIGN MINISTER AND OTHERS, WAS AT ABOUT 1620.

9. COMMENT. EMBASSY BELIEVES THE VISIT WAS A DEFINITE PLUS, DESPITE ITS BRIEF, HURRIED CHARACTER. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT CHAPPELL, BARTLETT, AND PROBABLY MURTHA WILL DEFINITELY SUPPORT THE SUPPLEMENTAL REQUEST, AND THAT ONE OR TWO OF THESE WILL BE WILLING TO DO ACTIVE MISSIONARY WORK TO HELP OBTAIN GREATER SUPPORT FROM THEIR COLLEAGUES ON THE HILL. WE FEEL THAT MCCLOSKEY MAY ALSO BE INCLINING TOWARDS SUPPORT. HE IS SINCERELY INTERESTED IN OBTAINING A CLEARER PICTURE OF THE ISSUES INVOLVED. MRS. FENWICK, WHO HAD A LONG SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR, WAS DEEPLY MOVED BY WHAT SHE HAD SEEN, AND IN OUR OPINION HAS PROBABLY BEEN WON OVER BY THE THE CONFIDENTIAL

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TRIP HERE. MRS. ABZUG REMAINED ADAMANT IN HER OPPOSITION TO FURTHER MILITARY ASSISTANCE, BUT WE FEEL THAT SHE MIGHT BE WILLING TO VOTE TO LIFT THE CEILING ON CAMBODIAN AID IN ORDER TO PERMIT MORE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE. SENATOR BARTLETT EXPRESSED PARTICULAR INTEREST IN WHETHER WE ARE DOING ENOUGH IN THE AREA OF PROVIDING MEDICAL SUPPLIES, AND ASKED IF MORE MONEY FOR THIS PURPOSE MIGHT NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE SUPPLEMENTAL AID REQUEST.

10. ALL OF THE GROUP EXPRESSED STRONG CONCERN THAT SOME FORM OF GAME PLAN BE DEVISED TO BRING THIS WAR TO AN END AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. AOTHOUGH DISCUSSION OF SPECIFIC POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS WAS AVOIDED, THERE WAS A STRONG TENDENCY TO MAKE THE POINT THAT WHATEVER CONGRESS MIGHT DO WITH THIS SUPPLEMENTAL REQUEST, ONE COULD BE CERTAIN THAT IT WOULD NOT GO ALONG WITH VOTING MUCH MORE MONEY FOR THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR, UNLESS PROSPECTS FOR A SOLUTION IMPROVE SIGNIFICANTLY.
DEAN

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